

parent to have the maximum amount of information available to assist you in making this very important decision for your child's education."

What is a Voucher? This booklet, also using many pictures, was prepared for the first year (1973) to explain the new system to parents, and how parents were to choose an education program for their child(ren).

A parent information program uses a parent counselor in each school who works 4 hours a day with pay, and two professional counselors. The initial goal was largely to disseminate information, but the parent counselors also help parents make choices and answer questions about the various school programs, with the result that the program coordinator reports the role is shifting more into parent education. The program is now head-quartered in the district instead of in each school, which helps to legitimize the parent-education role. The parent counselors consider themselves "enablers," with their work branching out to coordinate with other community agencies (e.g., welfare and nutrition), and with curriculum specialists and other staff. They also plan to start some parent study groups this year.

#### E-2. The Development of Institutional and Curriculum Alternatives in the Shelburne and Charlotte (Vermont) Public School Systems

This is an NEPTE-assisted program. An article in a July, 1974, issue of the Christian Science Monitor, based on an interview with Mrs. Billado, a parent now on the Shelburne School Board, discussed this project in which parents helped develop an educational alternative. Mrs. Billado admits to thinking initially that offering alternatives wouldn't work, that they would benefit only a few children. Now 3 years later, she enthusiastically supports both the program which offers choices to students and parents, and the process by which it was developed. Citizens have a choice of open, multigrade classrooms; traditional, one-graded classrooms; or classrooms combining features of both approaches.

Kindergarten through eighth grade students are now bused between the two communities to make the most efficient use of the alternative offerings. And the towns have a complete alternatives program in their elementary schools. Schools send home choice slips each spring describing the programs, and alternatives are explained to new parents at kindergarten orientation meetings. Parents and their children make choices and return the slips to schools. Mrs. Billado makes these comments

about the process and result from the parent-community viewpoint:

The big point is that the project wasn't imposed—bang!—on the schools and the community. (The professional educator hired as a consultant during the planning stage) gave us lists of books to read and explained how children can learn. . . . What excites me most about the alternative project is the community involvement. There are many more parents in the schools now and they are volunteering for greater and greater roles. . . . There's a lot of community education involved, . . . and I'd like to see (it) expand. This is where I'm putting my efforts now (as a board member). Parents in the classroom break down barriers between the school and the community. (From an article by Joyce Walkemir, special to the Christian Science Monitor, July 29, 1974.)

The 1973 NEPTE Annual Report states under "What Hasn't Happened" (in this project): (a) The project has moved toward K-12 articulation, but had not (then) produced enough programming to result in commitments by the school. (b) The Project Board had not tackled the task of making decisions for certifying programs and personnel for the programs. The authority was maintained by the traditional decision-makers.

### E-3. A Consumer's Guide to Educational Innovations

The Council for Basic Education believes the school's main function is to teach skills, transmit the heritage, and train the intellect. The foreword to this 95-page Guide, written by Mortimer Smith, Richard Peck, and George Webster (1972), describes the many changes of the past 10 to 15 years as resulting from (1) the Russian Sputnik in 1957, strengthening first science curriculum and then other academic subjects, and (2) reforms stressing social and personal regeneration and preparing students to adapt to a rapidly changing, unknown world future. Many innovations stressed affective as well as cognitive education and a reorganization of schools and reforms of the ways teachers are taught. This guide "through the thick underbrush of innovative proposals" is addressed primarily to parents as consumers of educational programs, but it suggests that school board members, teachers, and administrators who are often as bewildered as laymen by the "confusing smorgasbord of schemes for change" may also find it useful.

The authors claim every effort to be accurate and fair, but do not pretend the evaluations are impossibly objective. "The Council exists to further a particular view of educational purpose and its

judgements of the new programs and proposals are inevitably based on whether the innovations are a help or a hindrance in advancing that purpose." The authors suggest there is a pressing need for critical studies to determine the effectiveness of many of the innovations described in the guide, which include alternative schools, behavioral objectives, community schools, differentiated staffing or merit pay, micro-teaching, nongrading, open classrooms, and many more. The Guide is available for \$2.50 from the Council for Basic Education, 725 Fifteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D. C.

#### E-4. "How to Make Innovation Succeed--or Fail"

There is widespread acceptance of the concept that change is inevitable and that little improvement will take place without experimentation. In the early 1960's, changes focused on curriculum content. But since then, changes have been mainly in organizational arrangements and methodology. For this article (Childhood Education, Jan., 1973,) Maurice Ahrens reviewed a number of elementary programs where Title III projects were innovating and being evaluated. He found these elements important to success.

The degree of involvement of all concerned. Where teachers were not involved, little or no lasting change took place (modification of teacher thinking, personal meanings and behavior is necessary, and more likely to occur if teachers participate in making decisions about the planning).

The quality of leadership. Progress was most visible in schools where the principal had skills in democratic leadership and group process, and an understanding of elementary school curriculum.

The way in which teachers, principals, and/or schools were selected to participate. Participants must really want to work, not just be "on the bandwagon."

The degree of parent involvement. This includes procedures to help all laymen understand the purpose and significance of proposed changes.

Ahrens concludes that basic elements in successful innovating are the involvement of all concerned, adequate preparation, continuous planning, and research to ascertain whether change is better than what preceded it.

E-5. "Community Participation: Many Faces, Many Directions."

This is an article by Mario Fantini, which appeared in Educational Leadership, May, 1972, pp. 675-680. Community participation is moving away from a group notion toward individual participation. That is, each and every parent and student are education consumers. This notion gives the parent a leading role as a key figure in the school community. It is the parent who has an intrinsic tie with the student's welfare. Since community involvement is a political activity, emphasizing the individual parental role also serves as a safeguard against using the schools as a tool for more politically motivated ends, or for one group making decisions for others. It also emphasises the individual student as the key figure in the school.

This concept of community, in which parents and students form the major participants, with individual teachers (backed by other educational staff) also a central party, suggests professionals form a new partnership with parents and students.

In this period of increased consumer awareness, rebellion of parents is concerned with poor quality of education or with the dehumanizing effects of formal education. They call for accountability as costs mount.

Fantini identifies the following kinds of community participation: for public relations; for instructional support, for community service, for crisis resolution, and for accountability and school governance. Community participation is usually used to refer to school governance issues--to involving the community in making decisions. There are different modes of connecting the community in decision-making: consultative, advisory, shared, community control, and individual or family control. The individual has the right to participate in his own way and to make his own decision about which way.

The right of the individual student, parent, teacher, and administrator to choose from among legitimate educational options (probably inside public schools) will lead to a new individual expression in democratic community participation.

E-6. "Expand Freedom of Choice in Schools"

This is an article by David D. Draves, (School Management, Sept., 1971). Draves is another strong advocate of choice in schools. He makes two assumptions: that the learner learns best when (1) teaching goals

closely coincide with learner goals; and (2) when the learner feels comfortable with the teaching style of his instructor. But the average parent is prohibited from seeking out the school which most reflects his educational philosophy by neighborhood school district enrollment policies. Other monolithic standardizations (e.g., uniform state curriculum; uniform district textbook purchases) all restrict student and parent choices.

Draves asks for a system of clearly described and broadly publicized educational alternatives which would permit parents who want to exercise their rights to do so, and also permit other parents to delegate these rights to professionals. While not every school and system could be expected to provide grandiose schemes, they might provide modest ones.

I am convinced that learners would seek out those alternatives most conducive to their individual learning styles and goals. I am certain that many teachers would thrive anew under the stimulus of encouragement to develop alternative programs and practices. I am convinced that many administrators, teachers and parents would be surprised at how the public schools would evolve under these competitive conditions of alternatives.

Draves admits the change will not ease the life of the principal or superintendent, whose ability to stimulate change and to tolerate planned ferment will be tested. (Perhaps the Alum Rock experiment, Review E-1, will offer some evidence of the value of these assumptions.)

E-7. "Involving Parents in Schools: Toward Developing a Social Intervention Technology"

This article by A. Pomfret (Interchange, Vol. 3, nos. 2-3, 1972, pp. 114-130) suggests direct parent involvement as the most effective means of increasing student achievement.

Parents can improve a student's self-concept, provide or reinforce cognitive stimulation, and help formulate school policy. To bring about broadly based change, the involvement is seen to necessitate parental participation in school policy formation. In addition to adding a new role to the school, a redefined parent role necessitates changes in role relationships throughout the organization.

The Article explores ways in which the culture of the neighborhood and the culture of the school can affect the direction of the change process. Pomfret emphasizes that reliable empirical studies from community control and social science literature are not yet sufficient to provide confidence in conclusions about the effect of parent involve-

ment. Most studies have been conducted in lower socio-economic communities, and it is not yet clear how applicable this analysis is to middle-class neighborhoods and secondary schools.

Roles of principal, teachers, students, and parents will have to be redefined if neighborhood parents are expected to participate in the school's instructional and decision-making practices. Instead of being isolated and passive receivers of school information, parents can become an active, powerful, and informed source of school policy. The teacher's role will be in articulating the nature of learning processes to clients. Both must learn to communicate on these matters and engage jointly with others in policy formation.

#### E-8. "Overview of the Innovative Process and the User"

Michael Fullan of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education also concludes (in this article which appeared in the same issue of Interchange as the preceding Pomfret article) that a radical restructuring of the role of the user and a complete reversal of the direction of influence in the process of change are required if effective innovation is to occur. He analyzes the introduction of innovations in North American schools--the experience in two disparate parts of the literature: (1) attempts to improve the system and process of change without recognizing that it is the system itself that is the problem; and (2) "alternatives and radical reform"--containing devastating critiques of the system and some concrete alternatives. The analysis led him to conclude that, despite massive attempts and good intention, no significant effective educational change has occurred. He is convinced that effective change will not occur until the role of the user is radically altered so that he is intimately involved in all stages of the innovative process.

Two important characteristics of educational objectives which are particularly important are: (1) the diversity of user's goals in a pluralistic society; and (2) special difficulties in implementation caused by the nature of educational goals. Educational goals have a high level of generality (e.g., self-direction, critical thinking). Even with more specific curriculum goals, what is significant is not so much their generality but the differences and variety of operational decisions required to implement them. Attainment of most of the goals,

Fullan believes, requires continuous involvement, choice, and commitment on the part of the users, including teacher and student.

This process requires new skills, roles, and role relationships, which must be developed as part of the change process. Otherwise users will experience frustration and an inability to change, with the result that the innovation will be rejected or used in name only. Lack of clarity about the nature of new parent roles, and anxiety and concern about their competency to perform these roles, are fundamental problems in understanding the change process.

Fullan summarizes the rationale for parent involvement into these four points:

1. The implicit assumption is that parents have the right to have their objectives and priorities as one of the inputs into the formulation of educational goals.
2. Because educational goals are complex to implement, parent involvement is needed throughout the process. . . . Static inputs to educational goals by parents are ineffective (such as having parents choose among goal statements only at initial or broad policy stages).
3. The first requirement for the school and the community is to develop a clear rationale and set of criteria for working out the types of tasks that parents will be involved in and the interdependence of these activities with teacher tasks--that is, the division and integration of labor.
4. This must include a recognition of the role and rights of students in the process and a consideration of the consequences of goal choices made at the local level for life chances of the student.

#### E-9. "Diffusion Strategy Guide"

In the language of marketing research, this guide by James R. McCutchen and John R. Sanders (Early Childhood Education Program, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., Charleston, West Virginia, Nov., 1973) presents methods for planning and managing the spread of educational innovations. It employs the latest marketing research findings for use in marketing and diffusing research and development products in education. Although there have been many research programs developed in the last 2 decades intended to improve the nation's educational institutions, the article points out, relatively few have been successfully "diffused." Reasons for failure include: poor quality; an



inadequate diffusion knowledge base; inadequate funds for diffusion research; benevolent inattention to designing strategies for marketing and diffusing; exclusion of diffusion strategy from the design process; and the prevailing "hand-it-on" diffusion policy of the U. S. Office of Education.

Diffusion, this guide suggests, is a special function like research, development, and evaluation, requiring trained and experienced professionals. The function of "diffusers" is to select, implement, and evaluate tactics intended to produce informed consumers who understand new programs. At the same time, diffusers solicit feedback from consumers and provide it to developers with the intention of enhancing the "diffusability" of the program (product). Diffusers perform a Mason role, synthesizing a strategy for dissemination and implementation of program "output."

The article reports a diffusion research project at Ohio State University Center for Vocational and Technical Education which is developing and validating some generalizations intended to allow limited predictions as to what tactics (both one- and two-way) effectively communicate what messages to what consumers.

E-10. Foundation for Change, Inc.  
1841 Broadway (60th Street)  
New York, New York 10023

The Foundation for Change seeks to develop student understanding of minority views and to encourage white responsibility toward effecting social change. They produce, sponsor, and distribute multi-cultural and multi-media materials on racism, poverty, and ethnic pride for use as teaching aids in elementary and secondary schools, and they provide workshops and training for educators in racism awareness, developing multicultural curricula, and planning strategies for educational change.

Their publications include VIEWPOINT series of curriculum supplements on institutional racism for students grades 6 to 12; a PROUD series stressing pride and heritage of minority groups for grades 4 to 12; and Fact Sheets on Institutional Racism for teachers and college use. Brochures are 3¢ each or \$3 per 100; teacher kits are 10¢ each; and a 31-page booklet of Fact Sheets on Institutional Racism is 25¢.



Examples from the 4-page Viewpoint series:

Minorities and Education: Schools Flunk Equal Opportunities Exam  
Racism Rating: Test Your Textbooks

#### F. Focus on School-Community Relations and Communication

##### F-1. Some Aspects of School-Community Relations

This is a report, summarizing a wide variety of research studies by William H. Strand, Peninsula Study Council, Cooperation for Research in Education, Stanford University, May, 1963.

The interrelationship and mutual interdependence of school and community can be categorized into two levels which are not mutually exclusive: (1) the relationship between the school as an organization and an agent of society, and society in general (i.e., the task of the school); and (2) the relationship between the teaching-learning situation and a child, a member of both a family and society.

At each level the community role involves setting goals, providing resources, and evaluating, all of which are interrelated. That is, there is interaction between the school system and the community about goals, resources, and achievement; and at the personal level about parents' goals, taxes for resources, and evaluating a school as a basis for what is happening to their child. These points, at both societal and individual levels of interaction, must be connected by channels in the communicating process. Strand contends that the school should take the leadership in all three parts of the process.

Reference is made to the nationwide study conducted by Carter and Odell of the Stanford School of Education and the Institute for Communication Research, and its finding that, in practice, school-community relations are characterized by "situational solutions" (reacting to situations only as they arise; no long-range planning for educating parents and building public understanding).

The analysis . . . almost leads to the conclusion that the school regards itself as a closed system. As such it is concerned with preserving its own identity and surviving and is apt to cut down communication between itself and the community except when its existence or equilibrium is threatened.

A large proportion of voters in the Carter-Odell study felt they had little chance to influence the schools. Almost half were convinced that the

only voice they had in school affairs was through the act of voting; and two-fifths thought that educational policy is too complicated to understand. It is suggested that some members of the American public may place a high value on education because they think it is expected of them (a theory reiterated, by Gallup after his 1971 opinion poll). Studies show most sections of the public would like to get information from school officials, but are not turning to these people.

Research reviewed here shows a "high sense of efficacy" as most closely related to support of the schools. It also reveals that schools can do little to change the level of perceived efficacy in the adult population through communication, since a large proportion of those with a low sense of efficacy do not want to receive communications from the school and have no interest. These data force the conclusion that society itself must furnish the motivation and reward for an interest and participation in school affairs. To an extent, however, the school may be able to build a bridge to this segment of the population by means of the interested segment of the population with whom it is now in communication. In the long run, Strand believes the answer to the problem of efficacy and that of increased criticism of the schools lies in more education about education.

An example of the action-oriented suggestions contained in this report: inclusion of a unit on public education in the eighth grade curriculum results in greater knowledge and more favorable attitudes not only among the pupils, but among their parents as well. These attitudes spread as parents communicate with other parents about school affairs.

The report concludes with a section listing 8 characteristics for an effective school-community relations program.

#### F-2. School-Community Relations: A New Approach

In this book (McGraw-Hill, 1966), the authors, Merle R. Sumption and Yvonne Engstrom, take the position that the modern American community is in a continuous state of emergence, driven by forces of social and economic change; and that the school will in large measure help to determine which course the community will take.

A school unaware of the elements of change among the people it should serve fails in its basic responsibility.  
A school unresponsive to changing educational needs fails in its unique function.

Four principles considered essential to maintaining a desirable relationship between school and community are identified and described:

- (1) Recognition of the school as a public enterprise.
- (2) Recognition that public schools in the United States have the unique function and moral responsibility to seek out truth, wherever or whenever it may be, and to teach people to live by it. (Our democratic society requires this.)
- (3) The need for structured, systematic, and active participation on the part of people in the community in the educational planning, policy-making, problem-solving, and evaluation of the school. A lay board of education is not enough.

The knowledgeable participation of hundreds of people is required if the school is to make adequate use of the talents and abilities of those it serves. Only through the studious, thoughtful, and informed participation of the community can the school achieve its full potential as a social institution and an integral part of the community.

- (4) The need for a clear, effective two-way communication system. The community should know its schools, and the school should know its community.

Some more specific suggestions are given, such as the need for a structure which accommodates change (a school population is mobile; in some communities there is a 15-20% annual turnover). Objectives for a communication structure, consistent with stated principles, are listed.

The authors propose a "shared ownership" of the educational enterprise, and they assign to the school responsibility for taking the initiative to propose constructive forms of citizen involvement in the educational process.

It is incumbent on the school to assume a leadership role in tapping the wealth of human resources available in every community.

They stress that few people are willing to spend time in fruitless discussion or passive listening to educational theory, but most will listen and study if they believe it will really help improve education. They want some reasonable assurance that their efforts will lead to some action.

The book presents a fairly complete treatment of the subject. In these times of change, examples used in a book written in 1966 may

seem a bit outdated. But the basic principles remain unchanged, and many of the specific suggestions presented appear still to be good ones. Chapters are included on: the role of the community in education (determining goals, making school plans and policies, determining the program, organizing for community participation); citizens advisory committees (types, functions, selection, operation, and the case for a citizen advisory committee); communication between school and community (principles of operation, of intellectual freedom, etc.); and the school and social change (basic issues in school-community relations; the role of the school in social issues). Appendices include a 7-page constitution of the Citizens Consulting Committee to the Board of a school district in Decatur, Illinois; and a community survey instrument.

### F-3. Public Understanding of Education as a Field of Study

This publication reported a 3-day conference held late in 1967 at Stanford University, sponsored jointly by that institution and Project Public Information. (PPI, funded under Title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, was designed to strengthen public information programs and services in state departments of education.) The conference was attended by 50 college and university deans of education and journalism, school district and state department administrators, and media representatives. It was called over concern that the lack of qualified personnel to "tell the story of the nation's schools" was a crucial problem. A study done that year showed that only 7 out of 131 higher education institutions surveyed were preparing educational public information specialists; and that few educational administrators were being prepared for the difficult job of maintaining good relations with the public.

Three assumptions were made at the outset of the conference: (1) that public education is vital to the American society--democracy cannot work without an enlightened electorate; (2) that public understanding of education and educational understanding of the public are essential if schools are to continue meeting needs of society; and (3) that public understanding is not what it ought to be. As society becomes more complex, as knowledge expands, there is more and more dependence on schools. This has produced a potentially dangerous peak of public esteem, claimed

Stanley Elam (editor of Phi Delta Kappan), because esteem for education is not the same as esteem for schools.

Middle-class parents, who read newspapers and magazines, watch television, and are relatively well-informed and highly motivated for their children, were seen as choice targets for the press and schools.

Floyd Christian, Florida State Superintendent, admitted that some professional characteristics of educators are handicaps to effective communication. Their experience, attitudes, and habits do not lend themselves to a free exchange of ideas and information. For instance, they have a false impression about their ability to communicate, assuming that they are communicators by the mere fact that they are educators.

Many fail to realize that communications is not concluded when knowledge is disseminated. This is only one-third of the process. Communication involves disseminating information, getting a response, and evaluating that response.

Second, educators are not accustomed to competing for people's attention; they are accustomed to having a captive audience. Third, educators have operated in obscurity for so long they consider it inappropriate that their activities should be held up for public scrutiny. Fourth, they have such a high regard for their colleagues' professional ability that they unconsciously minimize the value of "outside" opinion. And finally, most of them, particularly administrators, have little communication experience and training.

If the assumption is accepted that public understanding of education's goals is essential so that schools can continue to reflect the needs of society, then major attention must be given to the public's perceptions of the roles of schools. The general feeling of conference participants was that a need existed for new college and university training programs in communication for educational administrators and school public information specialists; and that greater quality and quantity of communication among educators, citizens, and media representatives can result in the improvement of American education.

#### F-4. Guidelines for Public School Communication

This 20-page guide, issued in 1971 by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, is designed to help school districts plan, evaluate, and restructure communication programs for maximum school-community interaction. The preface defines the promotion of communication between citizens and schools as one of the most important responsibilities of school administrators. In the final analysis, the schools must take the initiative in communicating with all of its publics. Good communication is in the best interest of improving instruction, and of learning for better citizenship.

The booklet underscores the lack of trust which exists between parents, community and educators, and the obvious conclusion that the two groups don't communicate very well today. Educators are criticized by the public for many reasons (e.g., spending too much money, too concerned with frills, and not maintaining discipline). Parents and community in turn are criticized by educators as being too willing to turn over home responsibilities to the schools, as too tight with tax dollars, as using teachers as babysitters, and as wanting schools to maintain the status quo.

Primary responsibility for assuring good communication is assigned to school boards (presumably as distinct from the administrator responsibility to "promote" communication stated above).

Schools are society's transitional vehicles in which children can mature and learn in controlled atmospheres. But while administrative responsibilities are assigned to educational specialists, citizens have reserved to themselves the right to formulate educational policy. Boards of school directors have a primary responsibility to represent their constituents in a responsible manner. One of their first tasks is to assure mutual citizen-educator understanding about goals, processes and programs of education. Communication is the key to citizen-educator understanding, and school boards reflect their commitment to communication through policy.

The National School Public Relations Association recommends that education organizations write clear, concise policy statements with respect to public relations programs, and that these be (1) approved through formal action by governing bodies, subject to their annual review; and (2) published in their policy manual. The statement should express the purpose of the organization's public relations program and provide for the delegation of authority necessary to facilitate achievement of such purpose.

This guide provides examples of communication policies and of responsibilities of communications personnel from selected districts. It contains a section on the legal aspects of communication and on Pennsylvania's "right-to-know" laws (which prohibit governmental bodies from conducting their business and keeping records in secret without knowledge of the public); and it concludes with an instrument which school districts may use to rate their communication program.

(Note: The National School Public Relations Association is not included as a separate source in this review because they failed to respond to two requests for sample copies of material. Readers are reminded, however, that this association is a source for information about methods and techniques for educating parents/community, as perceived by education communication specialists.)

#### F-5. > "Improving School-Community Relations"

This is an article by Milan B. Dady in Journal of Research and Development on Education, Winter, 1972. Educators can use two tools to communicate with the community: public information and public participation. In the past, they have relied mostly on the former. While they realize that schools will survive only if the community holds them in high esteem as vital institutions, they have continued to operate with a one-way "sell them and tell them" policy. Seemingly, greater public participation would be an improvement. But Dady cautions educators that improvements in educational practices must be evident before the public's attitudes about schools can be changed significantly.

The majority of influence in the past has come from middle-class groups, with minorities being judged largely by their degree of conformity to the majority. But educators can no longer rely on the silent majority, which gradually formed as professionals assumed management of the schools, to protect the schools.

The question now is how to bring about a renaissance in cooperative school-community relations. Assuming the major goal is the restoration of the public as an active partner in school affairs, educators must not just use modern advertising techniques. First, they must strive to remove causes for a lack of confidence; and second, they must return to the simpler face-to-face relationships laymen once had with school people.



They must demonstrate that parents and community have a right to share in school processes. While educators generally believe that schools have been operated democratically, and that all persons have been served impartially, that has not been true in practice. Terms like "democratic" and "impartial" have been used so often, yet ignored so much, that they have become meaningless. Dady lists ten "grassroots practices" essential for success in school-community relations. (e.g., school board, administrators, and teachers treating all persons, including children, equally; an instructional program based on the needs of all people in the community; ferreting out inferior teachers and administrators from the professional staff; involving parents/community in planning and operating parent and community-education programs).

Educational folklore, Dady contends, has contributed to the public's growing opposition to the schools. While conditions have changed drastically in recent years, many education practices are still based on past convictions. He lists 6 examples of fallacious folklore, including: persons who start "school fights" want to harm school; organized minority groups enjoy power and deliberately harass educators; school boards should serve in an advisory capacity only.

A return to face-to-face relationships will not be easy. A public long accustomed to an inactive role cannot be expected to suddenly begin to participate with enthusiasm and wisdom. A network of advisory committees is suggested as one method which has been used successfully in school/community participation. But Dady warns of a high risk of failure unless such committees are carefully organized, and suggests 8 considerations to observe in forming such committees. Examples:

Communities in which people show the least interest in school matters may be the ones that would profit most from an advisory committee.

The school board should adopt a policy statement governing the use of an advisory committee, written in collaboration with the community.

Although advisory in nature, an advisory committee should be action-oriented.

The article identifies other forms of parent/community participation, most of which have been treated in previous reviews.

In this era of great uncertainty, it is important that the American people have confidence in their public schools. But Dady believes confusion will continue until an alerted public has a closer working relationship with professional educators.

Participation of parents as co-partners with staff is a gradual process, requiring new learnings by staff as well as parents (Wolotsky et al., 1968). Parents need to enter the planning stage of a program from the beginning and to continue through the deliberations of every aspect of the program. Effective involvement requires on the part of the parents progressively more and more initiating of ideas, more and more assistance in paid or volunteer roles in the school, more and more discussion of problems, and more and more participation in the resolution of the problems.

Two parallel developments which will take place in this process are (1) the staff's function will shift from professional control to shared planning, and (2) parent responsibility shifts from "pro forma" approval of staff-originated ideas to genuine involvement. Professional educators will need to be trained in these new approaches to developing school-community involvement and rapport.

F-6. "How to Rewarm Your Public's Support of Its Schools--and of You"

This is an article which appeared in American School Board Journal (no author listed) Oct., 1973.

It is a good idea for schools to take a reading on the community's true state of mind. But unless opinion polls are structured carefully, they may cause more consternation than they resolve. Targets must be clearly defined, as well as factors which contribute to public "understanding" of schools and their problems. An effective and inexpensive device for measuring these factors must then be constructed.

The trouble with most public opinion polls is that they measure only one of three factors that comprise public understanding: public opinion, public knowledge, and public vision. If only the first is measured, you are apt to get results that produce either disarmingly dangerous complacency or frustrating and puzzling misunderstanding.

Behind (parent's) displeasure lurks the eye of a serious school board public relations storm--one that only a properly designed and administered public opinion poll can explore.

John M. Nagle, whom this article identifies as experienced in conducting school district surveys, believes a board may equate favorable public opinion with quality schools, when in fact quality is far less than desirable. You have to indicate not only what the public thinks, but what this thinking means. A good poll can measure the level of public understanding, and at the same time establish the kinds of communication channels between schools and public necessary to raise that level of understanding. This article, incidentally, uses the word "educator" in referring to both laymen and professionals.

(Note: this issue of the School Board Journal also contains a sample survey in an article titled "How to Conduct a Solid Community Survey on a Shoestring" by Paul Anderson.)

#### F-7. The School Administrator's Publicity Handbook

Whether they like it or not, administrators are in the communications business. Information is becoming a major resource--for controlling physical and other resources. A complicating factor at the grassroots level is that the public has totally reversed its focus on news and human events, according to this interpretation. They are now much more interested in events far afield, and/or in news which is very recent. News which did not happen just a few hours ago is dead; buried; forgotten.

Regional and local administrators (communicators) can't fall back on the rusty, dusty days of old in communicating his needs, successes, failures. He must move fast. His copy must be fresh. And only through its humanism, its emphasis on people--student, teacher, staffer--and proper stress on involvement can the purely local story bloom and prosper.

This handbook (Operations Notebook #5, Association of California School Administrators, Sept., 1973) suggests that administrators "hypo their public relations activity" with stimulating content. Writers can carry an education program into the news columns, and win radio and TV exposure, by stressing glamour professionals such as jet pilots, mathematicians with new ideas, surgeons, etc. A staff member who believes in the involvement process should be asked to prepare listings of practical and immediate ways to involve the maximum numbers of people in the maximum numbers of activities.

Writers of this handbook believe the public is most interested in learning. Student achievement and educational progress should therefore form the heart of 99% of the PR thrust.

F-8. "When PTA Meetings Are Held in Clancy's Bar"

Charles Slough, the author of this article in the March, 1974, issues of Education Digest, was formerly director of communication for an Arizona school district; and is now a newspaperman. He believes the problem of public understanding of education involves the special way of life "forced on educators." Parents, who pay \$60 or more in taxes don't usually question educators as thoroughly as they grill the local plumber about a \$15 repair job. They wait until something goes wrong, and then "all hell breaks loose." Parents would not need to get angry at all, if they could drop by the school and talk to someone about their problems. But Stough finds that there are too few schools where an interested taxpayer can really communicate with anyone in the education world.

One of the biggest problems in education as it relates to my 2 children is that I can't find an educator, with whom I can talk. I want to entrust the educations, ergo the lives, of my son and daughter to someone with whom I can talk things over in Clancy's bar.

Stough believes there is something wrong with the way schools communicate with the public, considering the amount many districts spend on expensive public relations. They unwittingly destroy their own hopes of making education relate to the real world by perpetuating a "pedestal-creation" image. Parents and taxpayers should know educators as real people. They should know that educators know what the world is really like and are pleased to participate in it. Rehumanizing the teacher will be a lot easier, Stough believes, than creating the artificial barriers which have built up between the public and educators.

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